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English Land Restoration
League

Special report, 1895

London

1896

98-84390-17

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AMONG THE
AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS
WITH THE
"RED VANS"—1895.



London:
OFFICES OF THE ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE,
8, DUKE STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

MARCH, 1896,

ONE PENNY.

English Land Restoration League.

GENERAL COMMITTEE (FOR 1895-6).

- * J. ANDREWS
Rev. A. C. AUCHMUTY, M.A.
R. BANNER (Woolwich)
J. BANNERMAN, R.N.
CHAS. BEAZE
LEWIS H. BERENS
Rev. J. W. BLACK, M.A. (Launcells)
- * ANDREW CLARK
- * G. CUTELE
"CYNICUS"
- J. H. DALZIEL, M.P.
- * K. R. DICKINSON
- J. C. DURANT (Hastings)
- * CLEM EDWARDS
- * C. L. FITZGERALD
- * Rev. E. T. HAMEL
- H. W. HILL
- * H. B. HOLDING, M.T.S.B., U.D.C.
- THOS. HUNTER, L.C.C.
- R. S. JACKSON
- Rev. Dr. PAN JONES (Mostyn)
- H. E. KEARLEY, M.P.
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- TOM MANN
- * J. F. MUIRHEAD, M.A.
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- * J. J. PIKE
- F. P. E. POTTER (Cork)
- * H. H. PRESSBURY
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- * DR. RENOLLY
- * DR. GWINNETT SHARP
- Rev. T. T. SHERLOCK (Smethwick)
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- Rev. Prof. SHUTTLEWORTH, M.A.
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- T. F. WALKER (Birmingham)
- J. BRUCE WALLACE, M.A.
- SIDNEY WEBB, L.C.C.
- JOHN WILSON, M.P. (Durham)
- ALD. THE REV. C. FLEMING
- WILLIAMS, L.C.C.
- * J. E. WOOLACOTT

Hon. Treasurer—†§ Rev. STEWART D. HEADLAM, B.A., M.L.S.B.

Hon. Solicitor—CHALTON HUBBARD.

Standing Counsel—

General Secretary—†§ FREDERICK VERINDER.

Agent.—W. CHAPMAN WRIGHT.

* These (together with the Officers of the League and one Delegate from each Club or other Society affiliated to the League) form the Executive.

† Members of the Van Sub-Committee (1895-6). § Trustees of the "Red Van Fund."

Offices:

8, DUKE STREET, ADELPHI, LONDON, W.C.

THE "RED VAN FUND" is quite distinct from the "General Fund" of the League. Cheques, Postal Orders, etc. should be made payable "to the account of the Red Van Fund," and crossed "City Bank, Ladgate Hill."

All Communications respecting the League should be addressed to the General Secretary at the offices above.

The Secretary is in a position to arrange Special Lectures on "Life in our Villages," "Land and Labour in Town and Country," and similar subjects, by the various Lecturers who have been travelling with the "Red Van."

* Suggestions for the "Red Van" Campaign of 1896 will be gladly received by the Secretary for consideration by the special Sub-Committee.

ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE.

SPECIAL REPORT, 1895.

AMONG THE
AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

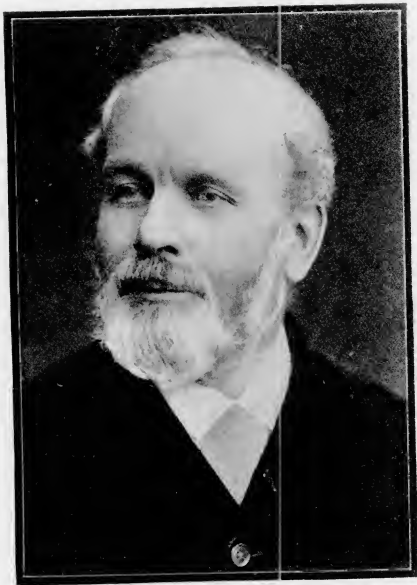
"RED VANS."

PRICE ONE PENNY.

OFFICES OF THE ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION
LEAGUE,

8, DUKE STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

March, 1896.



WILLIAM SAUNDERS, M.P.

Sometime L.C.C. for Walworth. One of the Founders of the English Land Restoration League, and for eleven years its Honorary Treasurer.

DIED, MAY 1ST, 1895

The Land Restoration Vans—1895.

REPORT.

BY WAY OF PREFACE.

THE previous issues of the "Red Van Report,"* which reached a total circulation of between forty and fifty thousand copies, have familiarised most English reformers with the village propaganda of the English Land Restoration League. But the following short account of the methods of the Red Van crusade may be welcomed by those who have not seen the previous Reports as a useful introduction to this short account of the fourth annual campaign, while others may be interested in it as showing the impression which the movement has made upon a keen French student of the English Social question:—

The rural lectures (of the English Land Restoration League) are carried on in large vehicles, painted red, and analogous to those of the travelling circuses. Each Spring the "Red Vans" follow the demonstration of the working-class organisations, which takes place on the first Sunday in May, to Hyde Park. Afterwards they set out into the country to make their tour, which lasts through the whole of the fine season. As soon as one of these Vans arrives in a village, the propagandists who are with it announce a meeting, round the Van for 8 o'clock in the evening; during the day they go among the houses and, gilded by printed papers of questions, collect all the information possible about the condition of the peasants. Sometimes they photograph the most wretched of the dwellings. Everywhere they leave the manifestos of the League, propagandist leaflets, cartoons in which the idea of the simple tax is interpreted in a form comprehensible to the simple and unlettered: they distribute them even to the children who are coming out of school. Frequently the landlord or his agent tries to prevent the Van from taking up its stand. Altercations and disputes follow, which now and then come to a conclusion before the magistrates. Sometimes the opposition is less brutal: it is represented by some members of the Liberty and Property Defence League, which is subsidised by a syndicate of big landlords (*subventionnée par un syndicat de grands propriétaires*), and which claims Herbert Spencer for its intellectual patron.†

* The Reports of 1891 and 1893 are now altogether out of print. A few copies of the following can be supplied:—

REPORT FOR 1891.—*Contents*: Introductory—An Important Conference—How Landlords Argue—A Reactionary County Council—The Village Greens—A Striking Contrast—Some Labourers' Budgets—The Depopulation of the Villages—Sweated Women—Slavery in East Wiltshire—The Cottage Homes of England—"Model" Villages—"Britons Never Shall be Slaves!"—"The Landlord as Confiscator—Two Cartoons by "Cynicus." (*Very scarce, price 6s.*)

REPORT FOR 1893.—*Contents*: Introductory—The Campaign of 1893—Imitation and Opposition—The Right of Public Meeting—The Village Schools—Parish Councils Propaganda—In the Workhouse and Out of It—The Labourer's Home (with three illustrations from photographs)—Village Slums—A Question of Assessment—Some Labour Agreements—Allotment Rules—The Labour Commissioner and the Red Van Man—The Story of a Boycotted Shoemaker—Two Cartoons by "Cynicus." (*Scarce, price 3d.*)

† Albert Meun, "La Nationalisation du sol en Angleterre" in *La Revue Blanche* 15 Janv., 1896 (Paris: 1, rue Laffitte).



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† Albert Metin, "La Nationalisation du sol en Angleterre" in *La Revue Blanche* 15 Janv., 1896 (Paris: 1, rue Lafayette).

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1895.

The meetings have been held mostly in the counties of Norfolk, Devon, and Dorset,* in the Midland district around Stratford-on-Avon, and in the Home counties. The total number of meetings was smaller than in the two preceding years. This was partly owing to the death, in May, 1895, of the Hon. Treasurer of the League (who was one of the guarantors of the Red Van Fund), which reduced the income available for the year's work by £100, and partly to the general political apathy which followed the General Election in July, and made it appear advisable to reserve special efforts for the spring of 1896, when the Parish and District Council elections may be expected to furnish better opportunities for useful activity. The following table includes all the meetings held under the Red Van Trust during 1895:—

COUNTY	MEETINGS
Bucks	17
Devon	53
Dorset	48
Essex	93
Gloucester	57
Middlesex	42
Norfolk	101
Suffolk	84
Warwick	34
Worcester	30
Berks (5) Hants (8) Northants (2) Oxon (2) Somerset (6) Surrey (2) Wilts (3)	28
Total	455

Of the above-mentioned counties, Devon and Dorset were quite new ground. These two counties seem to be distinguished chiefly by the urgency of the "cottage" question; the preference of the landlords for game over human beings; the scarcity of village greens convenient for open-air meetings; and by the almost universal prevalence of a system of "truck," whereby so many quarts of cider form part of the labourers' wages.

Even in the Tory Home Counties, both during and after the General Election, excellent meetings were held, and it has frequently happened that large and attentive gatherings have surrounded the Vans in places where hitherto the Liberals have been unable to secure a hearing.

* On entering the village (Bere Regis) we noticed the following legend inscribed in chalk upon a gate adjoining the highway: *Dry Bread Dorset. All work and bad pay, Go to the Union Some Day.* The superscription is neither poetical nor rhythmical, but it fairly well embodies the conditions of the county. We found the custom here is to pay the labourer 10s. or 11s. a week and give the cottage in, so that the wages are from 11s. 6d. to 13s. a week. When a man goes on piece-work for a week he is charged house-rent. We were told of a man in this place losing a day to see after another job. On the following Saturday he was stopped a day's pay and surcharged twopenny, being one day's rent. Every house is in the hands of the farmers, and this arrangement is deeply resented by the labourers, who feel the dependent position in which they are thus placed.—LECTURER'S REPORT, May 29th, 1895.

THE STORY OF A COLLAPSE.

The *Liberty Review*, *Property Owners' Guardian* and *Free Labour Advocate* (edited by the acting secretary of the Liberty and Property Defence League) made another feeble attempt during the past year to "supply an antidote to the teachings of the 'Red Van' apostles." Their lecturer claims to have held six meetings, and perhaps did; but it has hitherto been impossible to discover anyone who attended them. This campaign resulted in a failure even more prompt and complete than that of 1894, and its promoter covered his retreat under the following statements, which are presented to the readers of this report exactly for what they are worth:—

So far as we can judge, though the "Red Van" people may have made the labourers a little more discontented than previously, the attempt to indoctrinate them with land nationalisation and single tax ideas is proving an utter failure. The labourers can see that payment of rent to the Government would neither benefit them nor the farmers; and, as for taxing the land in the way proposed by the single-tax cranks, the general opinion seems to be that the land is already too heavily taxed.

Most of the labourers are discontented in a vague sort of way, it is true; but, then, who is not discontented in these days of unrest? The labourers are no more discontented than the ordinary business man or the town mechanic; they are ready to listen patiently to an exposition of agrarian problems, and appear to possess a good deal more common sense than the "Red Van" mountebanks credit them with.

THE RIGHT OF OPEN-AIR MEETING.

The first meeting held with the "Norfolk" van re-opened the question of the right of meeting in open spaces in country districts, about which so much has been said in former reports. At Brentwood, Essex, the lecturer was provided with a capital text for his lecture in the shape of the following letter from the agents of the lord of the manor:—

SIR,—We have already given you verbal notice that it is an act of trespass on your part to draw up and unhorse your van upon the greensward where it has been standing for several hours. The green, being part of the waste of the manor of Shenfield, is the property of the Right Honourable Earl Cowper, K.G., and as stewards of the manor we have to inform you that if your van is not removed without delay you will render yourself liable to legal proceedings, and it will be our duty to communicate the facts to the Lord, and to act upon his instructions.—Your obedient servants, E. F. and H. LANDON.

The Committee have no means of knowing what "instructions" the agents received from Earl Cowper, but, knowing his record, would have been much surprised had his lordship endorsed the action of his agents. The meeting was held, and no "legal proceedings" followed. With a view to giving the agents further opportunity of testing the question, on the two other occasions later in the year vans took up their position on the disputed spot, but the agents took no further action. It will be the fault of the people of Brentwood if the right of open-air meeting on a convenient space is ever again seriously disputed.

MANY THREATS AND SOME PROSECUTIONS.

The same lecturer, about a fortnight later, was summoned to answer a charge of obstructing a highway at Great Moulton, Norfolk, by means of a van drawn up on the grass at the side of the road. Three farmers, who appear to have instigated the prosecution, had to admit, under cross-

* See the *Liberty Review*, June 8 and 22, 1895.

examination by the League's solicitor, that no one was obstructed. The landlord of the "Fox and Hounds" deposed that he had refused the lecturer permission to hold the meeting in the inn-yard, because "it would do him no good in his business." Four witnesses, one of whom had driven past while the meeting was in progress, showed that there was no obstruction. The Bench stopped questions tending to elicit the fact that the innkeeper had been threatened with loss of custom if he afforded standing-room to the van, and, although all the evidence was in favour of the lecturer, the magistrates¹ fined him 10s. and heavy costs.

The Dorset lecturer was summoned for obstruction at Shaftesbury, where he had obtained the Mayor's permission to hold a meeting with the van on June 5th. The lecturer understood that the Mayor's permission enabled him also to remain for the night on the open space in front of the Town Hall. At a very unreasonable hour of the night, when the horse could not be come at, the police inspector ordered the van to be removed, and, in default, issued a summons. The Bench² being of opinion that there had been a misunderstanding, allowed the summons to be withdrawn.

Mr. Pearson defended himself with great ability against a similar charge of obstruction in connection with the meeting at Hemycok, Devon, but his appeal to the Bench not to strain the Highway Act to the detriment of the right of public meeting was useless. He was fined £1 including costs.³

¹ Major H. T. Holmes, of Wiston, "landowner"; Rev. W. J. Corbould-Warren, of Tacolneston Old Hall, Rector and "landowner"; J. S. E. La Fontaine, Esq., of Tacolneston Hall.

² The Mayor, ex-Mayor, and Alderman Dr. Wilkinson.

³ By J. C. New, Esq., of Uffculme, "landowner," and T. Turner, Esq., of Collyampton. These magistrates appear to interpret the law of obstruction with extreme severity. See the cases (including Pearson's) reported in the *Tiverton Gazette*, September 27th, 1895. It is worthy of note that, at one of the Hemycok meetings, a "gentleman," said to be the squire of a neighbouring village, tried to incite some of those present to overturn the Van, offering to be responsible for any pecuniary liability that might be so incurred. At a Norfolk meeting, beer was offered to anyone who would "pull the lecturer off the Van." Neither of these generous offers was accepted. At Topham (Devon), where the police had also tried to prevent Liberal meetings, the following resolution was adopted: "That this meeting protests against any attempt being made to interfere with the right of public meeting in this place, and further is of opinion that no obstruction is being caused by the present meeting, held under the auspices of the E.L.R.L." At Tiverton: "This meeting protests against the action of the Mayor of Tiverton in refusing to extend to the E.L.R.L. the same privilege of public meeting upon Lowman Green as is granted to other organisations." At Bourton-on-the-Water (Glos.) and Upwey (Devon) meetings were held on open spaces the ownership of which was in dispute as between the lord of the manor and the Parish Council.—The steward of the lady of the manor unsuccessfully tried to warn the lecturer off the Market Place at Aylsham (Norfolk).—At Mozeombe (Devon), the schoolyard, available for other meetings, was refused to the League. Everybody in the village, including the publican, was "afraid" to have anything to do with the Van. All the land "belongs" to Lord Stalbridge.—The Chief Constable of Weymouth threatened to summon the lecturer for obstruction if the meeting were held anywhere but on the Sands, only to be reached by a dangerous descent. His reason apparently lay in the opinion, which he gratuitously expressed, that the lecturer was "talking a lot of damned rot."

It is clear from these cases, to say nothing of the numberless threats which did not result in actual prosecution, that it will soon be necessary to obtain an authoritative decision of the High Court on some of the points of law relating to the right of public meeting in rural districts.

A SILLY SLANDER.

A case which was tried at the Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions on October 16th, 1895, illustrates another method of attack upon the work of the Red Vans. A shoemaker, vice-chairman of the Parish Council of Peabworth, was charged with feloniously sending on August 8th a certain letter to one John Taylor, threatening to burn his stacks of corn, and to injure the cattle belonging to Taylor and to certain other farmers. Mr. Cranstoun, who opened the case for the prosecution, took advantage of his privileged position to make the following assertions:—

About that time there was an electioneering van in the neighbourhood, and the persons in charge distributed pamphlets of a somewhat extreme character. One of the tenets held by the persons who brought the van there, was in favour of the nationalisation of the land, which, as they knew, was an idea that no one should be allowed to own any property, [i] but that it should be shared equally among everybody—very nice in theory but rather difficult in practice. There was no doubt that this originated the letter, or had something to do with the wording of it, because they saw the words used were "oppressing the hirsling," and he could show them that these words were used by the exceedingly well-meaning people who sent the van into the district.¹

Mr. Cranstoun did not offer a single shred of evidence in support of this absurd statement. Except that a Red Van was in the Peabworth district early in July, distributing pamphlets and advocating Land Restoration, there is not a word of truth in it. Mr. Cranstoun's ignorance of political economy and of the teachings of the men he slanderously attacked is only equalled by his ignorance of English literature. The phrase he quoted as distinctive of the Red Van propaganda is at least as old in English as the time of James I.²

THE WILDS OF WORCESTERSHIRE.

The Red Van reports since 1891 contain abundant evidence of the evil effects of landlordism upon the morals of the landlords themselves. No one who has studied the history of slavery in other forms will expect otherwise than that its effects upon its victims are bad also, not merely in a material but also in a moral sense. The wide-spread distrust not only of strangers but even of each other and of their leaders, which makes the keeping together of a Labourers' Union the modern equivalent of the labour of Sisyphus, is a perfectly natural outcome of the social tyranny under which the labourer has lived for generations. Here is a true story of a lecturer's experiences which illustrates one of the darkest sides of landlordism:—

¹ *Evesham Journal*, October 19th, 1895.

² See *Malachi* iii. 5 (Authorised Version). It is the duty of the Vicar of Peabworth to read these words at least three times a year (on February 2nd, June 24th, and October 26th), publicly, in Peabworth Church. Is the Vicar of Peabworth therefore responsible for the threatened burning of risks?

"Our van was placed on a small triangular plot of waste land in this village of Nauton Beauchamp, which lies four and a half miles north of the town of Pershore. At eight p.m., when I commenced to speak, some fifty men and women had assembled. Before I had proceeded far in my lecture, I was subjected to continual interruption from a farmer who later on was aided and abetted by another farmer. There is no policeman here, and none attended from the neighbouring villages during the night. Furthermore, there is no inn; but 4½ gallon casks of cider are sold to the men who club together to obtain the drink. On the night in question I continued my meeting till 9.30 p.m., when a 4½ gallon cask of cider having been obtained, the men gathered round the van, insulting us, and threatening violence. Between whiles they amused themselves singing the filthiest songs, and their conversation was of the foulest description. Worse still, young women were present, and they also indulged in unseemly remarks. There was one honourable exception, a young woman, wife of one of the villagers, who stood near our van from 8 p.m. till midnight, protesting with all the vigour of innocent maternity at the general conduct. Scarcely more than a girl, there she stood for four hours with a babe of only eight months in her arms. About midnight, suddenly, her husband disengaged himself from the low rasale around him, and, striding towards her, struck her full in the face with his clenched fist, loosening her teeth and otherwise bruising her. The woman staggered and would have fallen with her infant child had not another woman caught her in time. Then for a moment or two a scene occurred which almost baffles description. Shrieks from the women, cries and savage yells from the men, who were one and all on the side of him who had struck the mother. Suddenly the woman collected herself and springing forward dealt a swinging blow at one of the aggressors, crying out that he had been the instigator of the blow which her husband had given her. He reeled and fell, and then the three—husband, wife, and farmer—were for some moments struggling and fighting on the ground almost beneath the van. We did what was possible in the case, and then the man arose and drove his wife before him to their cottage near at hand. The 'Worcestershire savages' of this village stood idly by enjoying this scene, nor did they in any way attempt to stop the use of violence. Soon the husband returned, and then stripped and challenged anyone to come and fight him. More cider having been procured, the drunken orgie proceeded, and we were kept on the defensive in the van till day-break. Now, sir, the root of all this lies in the ignorance of the people. This village is hopelessly in the hands of the representatives of the system of land monopoly. There is no Parish Council, and when the parish meeting was called last December I am told that the indifference and ignorance of the people were such that no one attended. There is no clergyman, though one comes over on Sunday, I understand, to address the pews of the Church of Bartholomew, or the arms of the Beauchamp family which adorn the exterior walls of the chancel. Some, at least, of the local charities the people say can no longer be traced. The cottages, which mostly belong to the farmers ('tied'), are dear, and 'There is not a good one in the place.' The drainage is disgraceful, and the water supply so bad that only one man has decent accommodation in this respect in the village, the remaining villagers having to content themselves with the green and foul water from the brook. Of the morals of the inhabitants I have said sufficient, and the only consolatory remark I could draw from the oldest and largest farmer in this remnant of savage England was, that 'I had no business to come there at all!'

THE ROADS AND THE UNEMPLOYED.

Both the trouble and the expense which attended the work in Dorset and Devon were largely increased owing to the neglect of the various highway authorities. The log-books relating to the journeys in those two counties contain one long record of extra horses hired to pull up stiff hills, of circuitous journeys made to avoid almost impracticable gradients, of undue strain upon horse and van, and of narrowly-escaped accidents. When all the local horses are busily engaged in farm work, and the road to be traversed is a combination of switchback and loose pebbly beach, the work of those in charge of a heavy van becomes very trying.

What is to the Red Van lecturer the passing experience of a summer

trip, serious enough in the extra cost of money and labour which it entails, becomes far more serious as the daily lot of the inhabitants of the district, summer and winter, year in and year out. It is almost impossible to calculate the unnecessary expense to which the already over-burdened farmers of England are put by the culpable negligence of the road authorities, by their own stupid patience under an intolerable grievance, and by their fear of any reform that will tend to "raise the rates."

Meanwhile, from every district traversed by these roads, came the daily story of the village unemployed. Day after day the lecturers reported the presence in village after village of men who were out of work even in harvest time.* The lecturers, returning through Somerset from Devonshire, declared that the number of tramps they met on the roads exceeded the number of men to be seen at work in the fields at either side. All the lecturers agreed as to the growing seriousness of the unemployed question. Common sense would suggest to the new Rural District Councillors—who are Guardians of the poor also—that it would be far better that thesesalwart labourers should be working on the roads under the District Council than that they should be tramping, workless and hungry, along them, or increasing the Poor Rates by "coming on the Union." *Why not set the unemployed to work to grade the roads?*

Clearly the highway rate would be increased; but it is equally clear that there would be a large saving of human misery, a substantial reduction in the Poor Rate, a great economy in wear and tear of man and beast and vehicle, and a valuable permanent public improvement.

The real hindrance lies, as usual, in the private monopoly of land values. As with all other public improvements, the landlord in the long run will reap the chief benefit.† The improvement of the roads will virtually shorten the distance to the towns, and give an increased advantage to the farmer, which the landlord will coin into an increased rent, or use as an argument against a necessary reduction. It is upon this rental value of land that the rate for the grading and mending of the roads and the employment of the rural out-of-works should justly fall.

Here, then, is a useful piece of work for the new District Councils.‡ Let the unemployed be set to work, to their own present advantage and to the lasting gain of their neighbourhood, to make the rough places plain, and let the demand go forth that the landlords, whose lands are made accessible by good roads, shall pay for the cost of making and keeping them good.

* It was said that a hundred men in and around Swaffham (Norfolk) "had no harvest."

† "Every permanent improvement of the soil, every railway and road, every bettering of the general condition of society, every facility given for production, every stimulus applied to consumption, raises rent. The landlord sleeps but thrives."—*Thorold Rogers*. That the country landlords themselves understand this is evidenced by their advocacy of the making of "light railways" (at the public expense) in rural districts.

‡ The Rural District Council is now usually, and after 1897 will probably be universally, the rural Highway authority (Local Government Act, 1894, Sect. 15 (1)).

§ See *F. Verlander in Echo*, October 15th, 1895.

THE NEW COUNCILS.

A great deal of interest in connection with this year's work has naturally centred in the working of the Parish and District Councils elected in December, 1894. A mass of detailed information has been collected by the lecturers, and is filed for reference in the League office. The time which has elapsed since the first elections is very short, and the labourers, new to municipal politics, have, as was expected, made many mistakes and missed many opportunities. But in spite of the inexperience of those for whose benefit the Act was mainly passed, much good has already been accomplished. The Act has somewhat simplified the procedure for the acquisition of allotments, and is already leading to a large increase in their number, and in many cases to a reduction in their rents and to the substitution of public for private management. The subjects which, after the Allotments question, seem to have been most frequently dealt with, are Water Supply, Charities, and Footpaths.

Where the new Act has, so far, remained practically a dead letter—and there are a very large number of such cases—the cause is, more often than not, the fear that parochial reform means “raising the rates.” The advocates of self government in the village will do well to consider whether the provision of an elaborate machinery for the purpose is not to a great extent useless, unless accompanied by a drastic reform of the whole system of taxation, such as the Land Restoration League advocates.

A PARISH COUNCIL AT WORK.

Barford is a parish in Warwickshire, on the south bank of the Avon, about three miles from the county town. Its population in 1891 was 791, of which 179 men and 26 women had votes for the parish elections. The area of the parish is 1,594 acres. The village consists almost entirely of two long streets running at right angles to each other, and lighted with gas by a private company. The general aspect of the village is extremely clean, tidy, and respectable. The population is of a very miscellaneous character, and it is computed that there are not more than 35 *bonâ fide* agricultural labourers in the parish. There are several large houses with extensive grounds. The Earl of Warwick is lord of the manor. Joseph Arch, M.P., founder of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, has long had his home in Barford, but does not appear to take any active part in the life of the place. Cottages (rent £5) and water supply are reported as very good. The parish is well supplied with allotments and small holdings.

The first visit of the Red Van (June 2, 1894) resulted in the formation of a small branch of the Warwickshire Labourers' Union, with Wm. Ivens as branch secretary. The lecturer who revisited the place in the following October reported that the branch showed no signs of increase in membership, and that there was a good deal of apathy.

The Parish Council, elected in December, 1894, consisted of two representatives of the landlords, two tradesmen (a baker and a plumber), and two labourers, one of whom was Wm. Ivens. It is plain, therefore, that

the Parish Council of Barford is not, from the labourers' point of view, an exceptionally favourable instance.

The reported proceedings of the Council show that almost every matter that has yet been dealt with has been brought forward by the labourers' representatives. Mr. Ivens has promoted the erection of public footbridges over the brook which divides Barford from neighbouring parishes; called attention to the ploughing up of public footpaths; initiated a most useful discussion on the management of the village schools. He has caused a petition to be presented to the Council, signed by a large number of parishioners, in favour of providing a playground for the village children. His colleague, Mr. Partridge, has moved a resolution for the abatement of nuisances arising from open ditches and drains. The two labour members also brought forward the subject of parish lands and freeboards, and asked by what right landlords were felling timber upon land believed to be public property. With a view to ascertaining what documents belonged to the parish, and of gathering information as to parish lands, a sub-committee was appointed consisting of the two labourers and the clerk. Ivens's report, on behalf of the Committee, reads as follows:—

At a Parish Council meeting, held in April, 1895, we, the undersigned, William Ivens, John Partridge, and George Courlay, were appointed a Committee to walk upon the rector, the Rev. Cecil Mills, to obtain permission to inspect the parish chest.

In accordance with this request, on July 2nd, 1895, the Rector submitted to your Committee for inspection the Parish Award Box, and also a plan of the Parish, dated 1760. Your committee found the plan in a very good state of preservation, and a very interesting document for the Parish Council to know. But since the old plan was made out, a new Ordnance Survey has been taken and your committee recommend that a copy be purchased for the future use of the Council.

Your Committee also saw a batch of valuable documents, bearing date 1760, containing the whole history of the Parish, which your Committee recommend for the inspection of the Council. The Plan was drawn, and the documents written by Mr. George Solomon.

Your Committee also saw a notice convening a parish meeting, dated October 15th 1857, to consider the sale of eighteen cottages situate in the said parish of Barford, which meeting was duly held.

Your Committee also saw an Order for the sale of the said cottages, which was duly carried out, and the proceeds of the sale were placed in the hands of the treasurer of the Warwick Union at that time.

Your Committee recommend that the Council adopt a resolution to be forwarded to the District Council, asking them to make enquiries as to what the money derived from the sale of the said eighteen cottages has been applied. Your Committee also recommend that a safe be purchased by this Council for the safe keeping of all documents that are parish property.

ASSESSMENTS.

Perhaps the most striking piece of work for which Ivens has been responsible is the partial re-assessment of the Parish of Barford. As was pointed out in the last Red Van Report, the theory of the law is that land and buildings are assessed according to their value to the local rates. In practice, however, overseers, guardians, and assessment committees have for long been, in many instances, practically the nominees of lords of manors and owners of great estates. The allotment-holder and the tradesman have been assessed far higher in proportion to the value of



ONE OF THE "RED VANS"—A CHAT ABOUT THE LAND QUESTION

their holdings than the large farmer and the territorial magnate, while the way in which the mansions of the very rich have been under-assessed has constituted one of the gravest scandals of local government. It is plain that if the great landlords are under-assessed, every one else in the parish must pay more than his legal share of the local rates.

Mr. Ivens moved a resolution declaring that in view of the many improvements which had taken place in the parish in the erection of buildings, etc., and re-letting of land at enhanced rents, a re-assessment of the parish was urgently needed, and he supported his motion by instancing a number of inequalities. It appeared that the valuation of the parish had not been overhauled for many years. The Parish Council itself had no power to act, but it passed a resolution calling upon the authorities to take such steps as were necessary to remedy existing inequalities in the assessments. The consequence was the revision of three large assessments in the parish, which increased the rateable value by £200; the increase being—on Barford Hill House, £100; on Watchbury House, £50; on Pilestowes, £50. One other landlord appealed, and after much delay obtained some reduction on the amount at which he was reassessed.

In 1894, the gross estimated rental of Barford was £4,797, and the rateable value £4,139. Mr. Ivens's action raised the former to £5,180, and the latter to £4,532. The supplemental list, completed in December last, fixed the rental at £5,075 and the rateable value at £4,429. Every penny in the £ of the rates now produces about £1 4s. more than it did before the Parish Council was established, and the sixpenny rate, to which the Parish Council expenditure is limited, is now worth £7 4s. per annum more than it was worth before. Thus it is possible either to reduce the rates, or to increase the expenditure for the improvement of the Parish without adding a penny to the burdens of anyone except of the few large landlords who have been notoriously under-assessed for years.

Before the partial reassessment the parish rates had been 10d. in the £ for several consecutive half-years. The first rate after the reassessment was 7d. in the £. This was partly due to a smaller precept from the Union, and partly to the carrying forward of a somewhat larger balance than usual from the previous half year, but the reduction was helped by the readjustment of the assessments. Subsequent rates, even with heavier calls for parish and district purposes, have not exceeded the former limit of 10d. in the £.

AN EXAMPLE TO BE FOLLOWED.

There is not a village in the country where public improvements, necessarily involving increased expenditure, are not urgently called for. The example of Barford points to one way in which some of the money may be provided without adding to the already too great burdens of the industrial classes. The mansions and estates of the rich are notoriously under-assessed, almost everywhere. If improvements and buildings are to be rated as well as land-values, there is no reason why the improvements which the rich make to their own mansions should not be as rigorously assessed as the new shop-front of the village store-keeper, or the new barn



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of the small farmer. A general re-assessment would convince every improving landlord that a separate valuation of land and buildings, and the concentration of taxation upon land values, is more just, even from his own point of view, than the present system.

The Executive of the League will be particularly grateful for any information as to action taken by other parish councils in the matter of assessments, or as to instances of gross inequalities in assessments.*

ACCESS TO LAND.

There is no doubt that among the questions which have come before the new Rural Councils in their first year of office, that of allotments holds the chief place. Everywhere the labourer desires access to land; almost everywhere those who are interested in "keeping the labourer down" hinder in every possible way the attainment of his desires.

When, for instance, a van visited Alveston (Warwickshire) in September last, the chief topic of interest in the village was the allotment question. Two deputations had waited upon the Parish Council within the last six months to urge upon that body the necessity of obtaining more land for allotments. The Council consisted of a retired military officer; a keen, narrow-minded business man; a "manager"; a Radical who had "ratted"; two working men, and a farmer-landlord, of whom it is only necessary to say that he is locally known as "the Parish Bull-dog."

THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

The first deputation (from the local branch of the Labourers' Union) asked for a field of ten acres, then included in a farm of about 250 acres, let at an average rent of £1 per acre. As a result of the deputation, the Council wrote to the landlord's agent asking upon what terms the Council might have the land. The reply was, *three pounds an acre*. The labourers naturally refused to have the land at such a rent, and the Council, unwilling or afraid to use their compulsory powers, let the matter drop.

Later came a deputation from the hamlet of Tiddington—some labourers, the schoolmaster, a coalman, a butcher, and a cowman. The Council, however, professed to have discovered that the Act intended allotments only for agricultural labourers, and refused to entertain the claims of the schoolmaster and the tradesmen. Application was made by

* In a Worcestershire village (Broadway) is a farm of 102 acres, with a large house (now divided into tenements), also barns, stables, and other buildings; the whole assessed at £45 (equal to about 8s. 10d. per acre on the land alone). If the tenements belonged to poor persons they would be assessed at not less than £20. This leaves £25 as the rateable value of the 102 acres of land (equal to 4s. 11d. per acre). The allotments, with no buildings whatever upon them, are assessed at £2 15s. per acre—Mr. Popham, late overseer of Mintern Magna, Dorset, raised the assessment of Lord Digby's house from £100 to £200, and of the land farmed by his lordship to the same level as other land of similar quality. He solved the problem of determining the value of land held and armed by the owner by offering to rent the farm himself at the price which he named, as a fair basis for assessment.—One of the lecturers was informed that Iedgrave Hall, Suffolk, the property of G. H. Wilson, was not brought into assessment until within the last few years. Only the agricultural value of the land upon which the house stands appears to have been considered in assessing G. H. Wilson's estate, the house itself being entirely ignored.

the Council to the Trustees of 40 acres of Poor's Land belonging to the poor of Clifford Chambers, Gloucestershire, but situate along the high road between Alveston and Tiddington. This land was in the occupation of "the Parish Bull-dog" aforesaid, who had given notice to the Trustees that he wished to give up the land because the rent—thirty shillings an acre—was too high. He (being a member of the Council) recommended that body to apply to the Trustees for nine acres only of this same land, and to offer forty-five shillings an acre plus the rates (making a total of about 50s. an acre) for it. In this event, he would himself keep the remainder "at a valuation." Thus the labourers were to pay, for their half acre allotments, at least 45s. per acre for land which the farmer found too dear at 30s.

Yet, all the time, the Trustees were willing to let the whole forty acres to the Parish Council at the same rent as the farmer had been paying for them. The butcher, the cowman and the coalman were willing and anxious to take 5 or 6 acres each, but the Council—on which the labourers' representatives were outnumbered by 5 to 2—were determined that they should not be allowed to do so. Rather would they compel the labourers to pay 50 or 60 per cent. more in rent for their half-acre plots.

This was the position when the Van visited Alveston in September last. The lecturer did not fail to point the moral and to urge to action. The tradesmen decided to join hands with the labourers, and, in a joint deputation to the Council, to demand the whole forty acres. At a Parish Meeting held about a month later a resolution was carried unanimously, calling upon the Council to apply for the forty acres of land for allotments and to offer twenty-five shillings per acre. The Council forthwith applied, and their offer was accepted. A meeting of the applicants then requested the Council to appoint an allotments committee, consisting partly of Parish Councillors and partly of outsiders; and this resulted in the co-optation of three labourers on to the allotments committee.

A COUNTY COUNCIL THAT WOULD NOT "ENQUIRE."

If land for allotments cannot be obtained by agreement, the Parish Council may appeal to the County Council to hold an enquiry. Unfortunately the County Councils (outside London) are, with very few exceptions, among the most reactionary bodies in the Kingdom. The Council for the Parish of Tredington has the care of several villages or hamlets of their large parish. Of the eleven councillors six are regarded as thoroughly progressive. Ever since its election the Council has been continuously agitating for increased allotment land. About 23 acres have been obtained (by agreement) for the hamlet of Blackwell, and negotiations have been entered into for the transfer, from the landlord to the Council, at a reduced rent, of about 30 acres of land already held in allotments by the labourers of Armscott. But in the spring of 1895, the Armscott labourers applied for other 40 acres. The Parish Council wrote at once to all the landlords whose land was suitable, asking them to let the necessary land to the Council. As all the landlords refused, it became necessary for the Parish Council to apply to the Worcestershire County Council for com-

pulsory powers. Three applications have been made in vain. The first was set aside by the County Council as "informal"; to the second and third they replied that it was inexpedient to hold an enquiry as requested, although on the third occasion the Parish Council sent its clerk, a solicitor, to put their case before the Allotments Committee of the County Council.

HOW A COUNTY COUNCIL DID "ENQUIRE."

When a Parish Council is unable to hire land for allotments by agreement, and makes application to the County Council for a compulsory order, it is apparently the usual custom* of the latter to hold a public enquiry. How little the convenience of the persons most interested is considered in this connection is illustrated even in a county which is famous for its enlightened policy on the allotments question.

The Parish Council of Brailes has done some excellent work for its constituents (notably in improving the water supply), in spite of the presence upon it of an "opposition" in the person of Squire Sheldon—the gentleman who objected to the presence of the Red Van on "his" village green in May, 1894. Before the establishment of the Parish Council, the only allotments consisted of about 14 acres let out in chains at a rent varying from £3 to £5 per acre. The Council soon secured 23 acres by agreement, and applied for compulsory powers with respect to 18 acres more.

The clerk to the Warwickshire County Council, accompanied by two members of the Allotments Committee of the County Council, held an "enquiry" on Friday, September 13th last. Notices were issued inviting all who had applied for any portion of the 18 acres to attend the enquiry, the hour for which was fixed at 12 o'clock noon. As the enquiry lasted for nearly three hours, most of the labourers who attended were compelled to lose a half day's work, besides running the risk of incurring their employer's displeasure by absenting themselves in harvest-time. In spite of the fact that the squire's agent was present, two of the labourers entered a mild protest against the inconvenience of this arrangement. One of the County Councillors (a local landlord) replied that they could not expect gentlemen to come from Warwick to hold enquiries in the evening. The enquiry, however, seems to have been very fairly conducted by the clerk, but the sub-committee reported to the County Council in October that, if the compulsory powers were put into force, the cost would probably be so great that it would mean a prohibitive rent. It was decided, therefore, to ask the Parish Council of Brailes to reconsider their application.

The Parish Council called a meeting of the applicants, at which 13 attended, and they were not unanimous as to the rent they would be prepared to pay if the field were acquired. The Parish Council consequently withdrew, for the present, their application for a compulsory order.

* The language of Section 10 (1) of the Local Government Act, 1894, with its reference to Section 9, leaves it a little doubtful whether the County Council is legally obliged to hold an enquiry.

"EVEN THAT WHICH HE HATH."

Not only is every hindrance placed in the way of the labourers who wish to get access to land, but in many cases the little plots which they have are taken away from them.

In the parish of Church Lench, Worcestershire, is a small hamlet, called Sheriff's Lench which consists of one farm, about 800 acres in extent, and six labourers' cottages. The cottages were built by the landlord, the Rev. Chafy-Chafy, M.A., rector of Rous Lench, about twenty years ago. At first half an acre of garden ground was attached to each cottage. Some years since, the farm changed hands; one of the conditions upon which the new tenant took the farm was, that the six cottages should become "tied" to the farm, and that the six half-acre garden plots, previously attached to the cottages, should be thrown into the farm. This the landlord agreed to, and the labourers were forthwith deprived of their gardens, nor have they to this day regained possession of them.

THE VALUE OF ALLOTMENTS.

The experience of five years' work in the villages as to the importance which the labourers attach to the right of direct access to the land is entirely confirmed by the multitudinous reports of Parish Council proceedings, and letters from agricultural labourers, which are constantly reaching the League office.

So long as allotments are rented so much more heavily than farmers' land, there will always be a certain amount of truth in the view that the labourer's work on his plot represents only "a bit of badly paid overtime." But no one who is really well acquainted with village conditions will consider this the last word in the allotments controversy.

The value of allotments is partly economic, and partly educational; chiefly, perhaps, the latter. The labourer who has his allotment—produce—potatoes, and corn, and probably bacon—to fall back upon, is less likely to be starved into submitting to a reduction of wages in the winter or during a strike. If the labourer everywhere had the alternative of taking from the local Council a small holding, sufficient in size, at a fair rent and on a reasonable tenure, the end of "sweating" in the rural districts would not be far off.

But even on a small allotment, the labourer is able to compare his earnings, when working for himself, with the wages which the farmer pays him, and to contrast the produce of his few carefully cultivated perches with the yield of the farmer's broad acres. If he rents his plot direct from the Parish or District Council, he learns the not unimportant lesson that there is no economic necessity for the intervention of a private rent-monopolist between the cultivator of the soil and the community; that it is just as easy, and far better, to pay rent into the public pocket than into a private one.

* Even the miners, in their "living wage" struggle in 1893, found, in many cases, the immense value of allotments in enabling the worker to hold out during a dispute.

It is probably due to the perception of these facts by the landlord class that such a steady resistance is offered to the working of the Allotments Acts—Acts marred by timidity and suspicion, and made quite unintelligible to the rural mind by their amazing complication.

ALLOTMENT LAW: AS IT IS.

Legal machinery is now available for obtaining allotments (1) from landlords, by private agreement*; (2) from Trustees of charity lands under the Allotments Extension Act of 1882; (3) from the Parish Council under the Local Government Act, 1894; (4) from the District Councils Sanitary Authority under the Allotments Act, 1887, as supplemented by the Allotments Act, 1890, and modified by the Local Government Act, 1894; (5) from Boards of Guardians under a series of Acts passed only in the present century, which cannot be put into force until the Local Government Board fulfil their long-neglected duty of issuing certain necessary rules and regulations.†

Under these various Acts land may be obtained by hiring or by purchase, by agreement or by compulsion. Before the land can be acquired, the District Council, the County Council, and the Local Government Board, may in some cases have to be appealed to. When the land is obtained, all kinds of restrictions as to area, cultivation, and building, are imposed. With the later Acts already mentioned are incorporated parts of four Land Clauses Consolidation Acts, of the Railway Clauses Consolidation Act, the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1883, and of the Public Health Act, 1875. It is doubtful whether the lawyers themselves have even yet mastered the difficulties presented by the interlocking Acts of 1887, 1890, and 1894.

The position seems to be that, where the landlords are not willing to co-operate in the provision of allotments, the "agreement" clauses cannot be used, and the "compulsory" clauses are often almost valueless, owing to the expense of working them.

Then, again, the Small Holdings Act, 1892, enables a County Council (1) to acquire land to be sold or let in small holdings (1—50 acres), or (2) to advance money to the tenant of a small holding to enable him to purchase his holding. The general purpose of the Act is to buy out one set of landlords in order to create new small landlords in their place.‡

* The Agricultural Holdings Act, 1883, contains a provision for facilitating this. It is only fair to state that the lecturers have come across several instances of landlords who have done their best to meet the labourers' wishes. Lord Leigh, at Longborough (Gloucestershire), is said to have granted whatever allotments the men asked for at the same rent (30s.) as the farmers paid. Lords Rothchild and Carrington at Aylesbury (Bucks), and Sir E. Lawson and Mr. William Dupree at Beaconsfield in the same county (allotment rent, 20s. an acre), are other examples. At Calne (Wilt) Lord Lansdowne has let between 200 and 300 acres by voluntary agreement. Many other instances could be quoted.

† See the last Annual Report of the English Land Restoration League, p. 11.

‡ If the land has a prospective building value the Council may take it on lease instead of buying it; and, under some circumstances, a holding (not exceeding 50 acres) may be let instead of sold.

The Council may buy land, "adapt" it, and sell it. The purchaser must find at least one-fifth of the price; the Council may reserve one-fourth of the price as a "perpetual" rent charge, which is, however, redeemable; the balance, if any, is to be paid by instalments.*

AS IT MIGHT BE.

Apart from the wise but neglected allotment legislation of George III. and William IV., the simplest and least unreasonable provisions of the existing law are to be found in section 10 of the Local Government Act, 1894. This section enables the Parish Council to *hire* land for allotments, and, in this case, removes some of the unreasonable restrictions as to area and power of building on allotments which were enacted in 1887. This section might well be taken as a precedent when the badly needed codification and simplification of the law of allotments and small holdings are undertaken. The amendments most urgently needed seem to be:—

(1) The extension of the power of compulsory *hiring* of land by Parish Councils. The land should be taken at a valuation, and the fixed rent paid by the Council would of course be subject to any tax which might afterwards be imposed upon land values. When the tax reaches 20s. in the £ the land will of course become the property of the Parish. This method presents the double advantage of avoiding altogether the necessity of borrowing money for land purchase, and so burdening the parish with debt; and of meeting out equal justice to all landlords—none will be "bought out," all alike will be "taxed out."

(2) Under no circumstances, when land has been acquired by the parish or any public authority, should it ever be sold again—either to labourers or to anyone else. The labourer demands access to land; there is practically no demand for peasant *ownships*.†

(3) No restriction should be placed upon the area which may be let to any parishioner, but the freest possible hand should be given to each parish to make the best possible use of its own land, through the machinery of its elected Council.

(4) All local rates should be assessed upon the value of the land apart from improvements, whether land is used, or let, or held idle by the "owner." The labourer or farmer who improves his holding should not be fined for so doing. The pressure of the tax upon the dog-in-the-manger type of landlord would immensely facilitate the acquisition of land for allotments, and would probably render compulsory powers almost unnecessary.

Such a law as is here sketched might be made, what the existing law certainly is not, simple and intelligible. It would lay a firm foundation

* A return recently obtained by Mr. Macdonald shows that only seven counties in England and one in Scotland have obtained any land under Mr. Chaplin's Act. The total amount of land thus obtained is 483 acres, of which Worcester accounts for 147 acres and Lincoln for 135 acres. In 27 English and 12 Scotch counties petitions have been presented, but no land acquired. In England and Wales 27 counties, and in Scotland 15, have taken no action whatever.

† The reports of the lecturers on places where small *ownships* prevail afford no encouragement for looking to mere "free sale of land" as a solution of the land question.

for a rural revolution. Emancipated from the bondage of the landlord and sweater, working for himself on land for which a fair rent is paid to the parish to be spent for the benefit of the parishioners, the tiller of the soil would be no longer a wage-slave, but a free citizen. A very slight extension of its powers would enable the Parish Council to keep for the benefit of the "small men" the most improved agricultural machinery—the steam-plough and the self-binder—which the labourer under landlordism regards with suspicion because it is used only to his disadvantage.

The centre of the district from which most of the above illustrations of the working of the Allotments Acts are drawn is the town of Stratford-on-Avon. One of the few large industries in Stratford employs about 200 "hands." Ordinary labourers on being engaged are paid 13s. per week, rising, if entire satisfaction is given, by monthly increments of 1s. to a maximum of 16s. per week. For the ordinary labourer there is no hope of ever rising above this, unless he be promoted to the position of teamster at 18s. Foremen are paid 20s. per week. The average rent of a cottage runs from 4s. to 5s. per week, leaving to the best-paid labourer no more than 11s. or 12s. with which to provide food, clothing, books, medicine, and amusement for his family in a town. The firm let out to their employees small allotments (eight to the acre) at a rental of ninety-six shillings per acre.

A good deal of overtime is worked, but, apparently, it is never paid for. The overtime is placed to the credit of the workman, and, whenever it suits the convenience of the firm, the labourer is allowed to take it out in days or half-days. But should a labourer lose a day or half-day on his own account he is not allowed to offset the loss against his credit for overtime, but the time lost is deducted from his current week's wages. It is also said that very arbitrary rules are in force.

Now, if access to land could be obtained throughout the district by some such easy and cheap process as is sketched above, is it likely that employers could induce men to work for them on such terms as these?

LANDLORDISM AND SLAVERY.

The essence of slavery is in empowering one man to obtain the labour of another without recompense. Private property in land does this as fully as chattel slavery. The slave-owner must leave to the slave enough of his earnings to enable him to live. Are there not, in so-called free countries, great bodies of working men who get no more? How much more of the fruits of their toil do the agricultural labourers of England get than did the slaves of our Southern States?—HENRY GEORGE.

POSTSCRIPT.—The Red Van Committee will be glad at any time to receive Local Histories, Directories, Maps, or Guide Books (of whatever date); Annual or Special Reports of County, District, or Parish Councils, or of Boards of Guardians; of Charities, or of Allotment Trustees; Enclosure Awards, etc., etc.; marked copies of Newspapers containing information on land and labour questions, such as are discussed in present and previous reports. Any information which may be useful in checking, correcting, or supplementing the reports of the lecturers will be at all times welcomed.

SPECIAL APPEAL.

The admirable portrait of the late Honorary Treasurer of the League, which the Committee are able to include in this Report, will once more bring to mind the great loss which the movement has sustained since the last report was issued. On May 22nd, 1895, the following resolution was unanimously adopted at a meeting held in the Large Hall of the Club and Institute Union:—

"That the members of the English Land Restoration League, at their Twelfth Annual meeting, holding in grateful remembrance the manifold services rendered to the League, and to the cause of political and social reform generally, by WILLIAM SAUNDERS, M.P., one of the founders of the League, and for nearly eleven years its Honorary Treasurer, places on record its deep sorrow at the death of so fearless and trusted a leader, and respectfully endorses its sympathy to Mrs. Saunders, and the other members of the family, in their bereavement."

Mr. Saunders was Treasurer, not only of the League, but also of the Red Van Fund, to which he was himself a generous subscriber. One half of his usual annual subscription of £200 had been paid into the Fund before his death. During the present year (1896), the full financial effect of his loss will make itself felt, in the reduction of the guaranteed subscription by £200. At the end of the year, the original five years' guarantee of £1,000 a year will have expired.

About no subject in connection with the League's work was Mr. Saunders more anxious, during the later years of his life, than about the establishment of an adequate fund upon a broad and permanent basis. The danger, to which he so often referred, of the League's work being crippled by the death or withdrawal of one or more of its few large subscribers, has been strikingly exemplified, during the past eighteen months, by his own death, following close upon the loss of Mr. S. M. Burroughs and of Mr. H. Hutchinson.

The members of the League, and the still more numerous public among which the Red Van Report circulates, have, so far, contributed but a small proportion of the Special Fund by means of which the Red Van work has been carried on. This fact is, no doubt, largely due to the general belief that the work was already well provided for by guaranteed subscriptions; and the Committee of the League have themselves usually preferred to make their appeals on behalf of departments of the work whose financial needs were at the moment greater.

The time has now arrived, however, when the Committee feel bound to impress upon the many thousands who have taken interest in the work of the Red Vans that the continuance of that work depends this year partly, and will after this year wholly depend, upon the multitude of small subscriptions from those directly interested in the reform, rather than upon a few large sums contributed by wealthy friends who, in some cases at least, have much to lose by the abolition of landlordism and monopoly.

The records of five years' work have now been placed before the public. On those records the Committee confidently rests its appeal for the means of continuing that work.

March, 1896.

THE "RED VAN" FUND.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE, JAN. 14, 1895—JAN. 14, 1896.

Receipts.		Expenditure.	
Balance Brought Forward, Jan. 14, 1895	£3 15 0	VANS—Repairs, Fittings, and Utensils... ..	£6 16 13 4½
Subscriptions (as per list on p. 23)	" " 9 14 0	SALARIES:	
Mentore Schreiner	" " 32 9	Drivers (including Horse Hire)	£104 3 4
Advertisements ("Red Van Report," 1891)..	" " 3 5 0	Organising Expenses at Central Office	209 7 3
		Travelling Expenses	111 8 0
		Printing.....	10 8 0½
		Postages, Telegrams, Parcels, and Poundage on Letters.....	114 15 0
		Advertisements, Billposting, and Distributing	58 14 10½
		Standing for Vans, and Tolls	1 18 9
		Oil, Washing, Candles, and Sundries	7 18 11
		Stationery, Maps, Directories, and Preliminary Paperwork.....	8 16 1 1
		Wardhousing Vans and Utensils during Winter in London.....	14 18 1½
		Repairs on Vans, £1 95	19 12 0
		Legal Expenses and Licences	11 0 1½
		Insurance	0 3 0
		Cheque Book	0 8 4
		Balance Carried Forward....	£179 3 9½
	<u>£93 19 0</u>		<u>£93 19 0</u>

Examined with the Bank Book and Vouchers and found correct.
LONDON, 30th March, 1896.

SAMUEL J. BOYCE,
Chartered Accountant,

LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Guarantors' Subscriptions	£	s.	d.	Forward	£	s.	d.
... .. 900	0	0	0	Hopkins, W.	1	0	0
—				"Iconoclast"	0	2	6
OTHER SUBSCRIBERS.				Keat, Ed.,	0	2	6
Armfield, W. N.	0	10	0	King, K. A.	0	1	0
Arthur, George	0	10	0	"Lead Ahead!"	0	10	0
Bailet, J. W.	0	2	6	MacDonald, D. C.	0	2	6
Bartlett, Jas.	0	2	6	Macrae, Jas.	0	1	0
Baster, W.	0	5	0	Muse, Thomas	0	1	6
Beacham, O.	0	5	0	Otell, Owen	0	5	0
Birchall, Rev. O.	0	5	0	Presbury, H. H.	0	5	0
Boro' of Hackney Working Men's Club	0	10	6	Richardson, J.	0	2	6
Brown, J.	0	2	6	Skerrett, Miss	0	10	0
Bruce, Wm.	0	10	0	Stearns, H. B.	0	1	0
Clark, John	0	1	0	Stephen, John	0	2	6
Cowdery, W. C.	0	1	0	Sugate, H. E.	0	2	0
Cox, A. W.	0	5	0	Taylor, Rev. A. D.	1	0	0
Daw, E.	0	1	0	Taylor, Miss H.	0	5	0
Edmonstone, Miss	0	1	6	Townsend, H.	0	1	0
Eley, C. K.	0	2	0	Townsend, Edw.	0	2	6
Estcourt, R.	0	1	0	Walter, Miss B.	0	5	0
Foote's Friends (per J. G.)	0	2	0	Ward, John	0	1	0
Greaves, W. W.	0	4	0	West Southwark Radical Club	0	10	0
Hickmott, A.	0	2	6	Whitehead, John	0	5	0
				Whitehead, J. T.	0	1	0
				Whte, W.	0	1	0
				W. (2nd don.)	0	1	0
				Williams, Mrs.	0	1	0
				Wilson, H.	0	1	0
				Wright, Miss A. C. G.	0	5	0
	£904	8	6		£914	10	0

The Executive of the English Land Restoration League earnestly appeal to all readers of this Report, who find themselves in sympathy with the work of the "Red Vans," for contributions towards the maintenance and extension of that work during the season of 1896.

Subscriptions or Donations towards the Special "Red Van Fund," or towards the General Fund of the League, will be gratefully acknowledged, and should be sent to the General Secretary, E.L.R.L., 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.

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OBJECT. The Abolition of Landlordism.

METHOD. The abolition of all taxes upon labour and the products of labour and the earnings of labour, and the increase of taxation upon land values until the whole annual value of land is taken in taxation for public purposes.

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Secretary.

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BY HENRY GEORGE

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